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ABSTRACT

The Navajo Administrator Training Program (NATP) was initiated to prepare graduate level Navajo administrators for Navajo schools. A cooperative program involving the Navajo Tribe, University of New Mexico, and the Carnegie Corporation, the nontraditional graduate program alternates intensive one-week on-campus sessions with five-week off-campus work experiences three times per semester during the academic year (six hours credit per semester). Students attend two eight-week summer sessions to complete the masters program in two years. Both field-based and university-based coordinators provide support services during off-campus periods. Of the 50 students enrolled since January 1975, 21 have graduated, most of whom are now holding administrative positions on the reservation. Instructors are regular university staff and guest lecturers. In addition to traditional educational administration courses, special attention is given to unique Navajo problems and applications. NATP, an exportable model of quality graduate education, has increased the number of on-reservation Navajo administrators, enhanced Navajo self-sufficiency and self-determination in education, strengthened bonds between university and tribe, and provided a professional career ladder for a population whose advancement was previously limited. (Author/RS)

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NAVAJO ADMINISTRATOR TRAINING PROGRAM

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Submitted by the

College of Education

of

The University of New Mexico

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ABSTRACT

The Navajo Administrator Training Program (NATP) is a cooperative effort on the part of the Navajo Tribe, the University of New Mexico, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York to prepare graduate level Navajo administrators for Navajo schools. Initiated in late 1973 under the impetus of the Navajo Division of Education, the program is currently in the latter stages of Phase II. To date, twenty students have completed an M.A. degree program, the majority of whom are now holding administrative positions on the Reservation.

The NATP is a non-traditional graduate program. Educational experiences are provided both on- and off-campus, thus reducing student dislocation problems. One week intensive on-campus sessions are alternated with 5 week off-campus work experiences. This pattern is repeated 3 times per semester during the academic year. Both field-based and university-based coordinators provide support services during the off-campus periods.

Program content is grounded in the traditional literature of educational administration, e.g., law, finance, supervision. However, special attention is devoted within these domains to unique Navajo problems and applications. Instruction is provided by the regular staff of the Department of Educational Administration supplemented by frequent guest lecturers.

The program has been instrumental in increasing the number of on-Reservation Navajo administrators, enhancing Navajo self-sufficiency and self-determination in education, in strengthening the bonds between the University and the Tribe, and in providing a professional career route for a previously under-served population.

A. Description and Development of the Program

In order to understand the Navajo Administrator Training Program one must first understand the Navajo Nation. It is first a people, "the Dine'," whose history extends backward to the dawn of time, and who, over the centuries, have developed a unique cultural configuration of language, symbols, traditions, and life styles. The Dine', 150,000 strong and the largest of the Indian Tribes in the Continental United States, are dispersed over a 25,000 square mile Reservation embracing part of the states of New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah. No metropolitan areas dot the landscape; instead the passing traveler finds widely scattered small villages and towns with faintly romantic names like Lukachukai, Window Rock, Tohatchi, and Ft. Defiance. Matching the names is a hauntingly beautiful landscape--sheet sandstone bluffs, canyons, wide valleys, high mesas, and monolithic rock pinnacles. It is a rugged but fragile land, supporting little more than subsistence farming and grazing.

In a simplistic way, the Navajo Nation is analogous to a "developing country"--a "Third World" country in the heart of "The New World." Economically, the median income of the people is substantially lower than that of the nation as a whole; its economic infrastructure (transportation and communication systems) is marginal to non-existent; its considerable natural resources (coal and uranium in particular) are only now being developed. Its governance structure is still basically clan and "chapter-house" oriented, although an increasingly powerful and centralized Tribal government is emerging.

The educational history of the Navajo Nation has largely paralleled its economic development. Formal schooling, as we customarily understand it, was introduced to the Navajo Nation by the Presbyterian Board of Missions in 1869. In that year a one room school house was opened at Ft. Defiance with the explicit purpose of "civilizing and Christianizing the Navajo." Thereafter, formal education became one of the treaty obligations of the United States government under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. However, the "missionary" philosophy was kept intact. Hence, the conscious decision to build boarding rather than day school facilities. At the opening of the first boarding school in 1883, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs affirmed that the goal of such schools was not economic, but cultural. In brief, the stance taken was that by removing children from their home and community environment their assimilation into the larger society, their acculturation, would be hastened. Finally, it should be noted that traditional public school education was a relative late-comer to the scene, given that Utah became a state in 1896, New Mexico in 1912, and Arizona in 1912.

The general quiescence of the Navajo people to these historic educational developments come to an abrupt end in the mid '60's. Externally, the country as a whole became more conscious of the historically disenfranchised, and national legislation was enacted to alleviate long-standing inequalities. Internally, the Navajo Nation girded itself to press its claims for self-sufficiency and self-determination. One feature of that movement was the creation of the Navajo Division of Education (NDOE). Its prime directive was to spearhead the development of a uniquely Navajo educational system.

In surveying the educational domain, NDOE noted immediately the glaring absence of Navajo educators in Navajo schools. The initial approach, therefore, was to seek university support for the training and subsequent placement of Navajo teachers in the schools. The success of these efforts became apparent by the mid-70's as Navajo teachers were seen in considerable numbers in Reservation classrooms. However, the very success of the several teacher training programs emphasized another glaring deficit--the almost universal (less than 1%) absence of Navajo Administrators. At that point, the Navajo Administrator Training Program came into being.

In November of 1973, Mr. Dillon Platero, then Director of NDOE, presented a paper to the Advisory Council of the Navajo Teacher Education Program entitled, "Proposed Program for the Education of Navajo School Administrators." The Council concurred with the proposal presented, and immediately thereafter a series of meetings was held between NDOE and the College of Education (UNM) faculty and administration to determine what cooperative steps could be productively taken. What followed was a long and complex sequence of inter- and intraorganizational negotiations. A non-traditional program had to be developed which would meet the differential expectations of a department faculty, the Graduate School of the University of New Mexico, the potential funding agency, NDOE, and multiple LEAs. In addition, new organizational structures and processes had to be created. However, by the Fall of 1974, the major problems had been resolved, and the receipt of a $249,414 grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to the Navajo Tribe made it possible for 21 Navajos to begin graduate work in Educational Administration in January of 1975.

The initial 2-year grant (and program) was scheduled to expire in January of 1977. However, the demonstrable success of the program and some financial savings made it possible to seek and receive a two semester extension. During that period of time a "Phase II" proposal was prepared and submitted to the Carnegie Corporation for a full 2 year (1977-1979) extension of the program. The proposal was favorably reviewed, and the Navajo Administrator Training Program is currently in the latter stages of "Phase II."

B. Program Goals and Objectives

In any complex interorganizational undertaking, goals tend to be diffuse, multiple, and only partially overlapping. Partialled out, one could distinguish the following broad organizational goals:

The Navajo Nation (through NDOE)

1. The transformation of educational agencies on the Reservation from Anglo orientation to a Navajo orientation.
2. Increased Navajo self-sufficiency and self-determination in educational affairs.

The University of New Mexico

1. To provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, particularly the under-served, within its service area.

The College of Education (UNM)

1. To provide high quality educational opportunities for individuals seeking careers in education.

The Department of Educational Administration (COE, UNM)

1. To provide advanced training in administration for potential leaders in educational agencies.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York

1. To provide financial support for programs consistent with its mission as a philanthropic institution.

These several global objectives coalesced in the specific objective of the NATP: To prepare 40 committed, culturally and linguistically qualified Navajos to assume major administrative positions in the education agencies on the Navajo Reservation.

Successful execution of the specific NATP objective required consideration and successful accomplishment of the following salient operational objectives:

1. Devising a meaningful partnership with NDOE and the Advisory Council relative to such factors as student recruitment and admissions.
2. Devising a non-traditional program which would simultaneously meet the requirements of a conservative Graduate School and the demand for a two year program which would not remove student participants from their work settings.
3. Devising a system for maintaining contact with and monitoring the performance of students in widely scattered locations.
4. Securing support from school administrators for released time for program participants.
5. Constructing a curriculum which would (a) insure that program graduates were certifiable as school administrators in multiple states; (b) provide solid grounding in administrative theory and practice relevant to the needs of Navajo educational

agencies; and (c) allow for sensitivity to and exploration of unique Navajo elements.

6. Securing faculty and support personnel necessary for the execution of the project.

In the judgment of the major groups and institutions represented in the project, these objectives--global, specific, and operational--have been achieved.

C. Program Design

The program design contained two major elements: program content and program delivery system. Both were constrained and guided by the objectives previously identified. The program content closely paralleled that ordinarily offered by the Department of Educational Administration. Courses in such traditional facets of administrator training, e.g., School Law, Organizational Behavior, Personnel Administration, School/Community Relations, Supervision of Instruction, etc., formed the backbone of the program content. However, these offerings were (are) richly supplemented through engaging consultants who had recognized expertise in some related aspect of Navajo education. Further, the course content emphasis tends to be shifted to meet the needs of the population served. For example, the School Law course devotes itself to not only milestone decisions in public education, but more specifically addresses such Indian legislation as P.L. 93-638 which allows "contracting with the Federal government for educational services." Similarly, the School/Community Relations course not only addresses traditional relationships, but also those emanating from the chapterhouse form of local government found on the Reservation.

The more innovative aspect of the program was (is) the instructional delivery system. Students were enrolled in 6 hours per semester during the academic year in what came to be known as the 1-5-1-5-1 design. In brief, students were (are) in attendance on campus during the first, sixth, and eleventh week of the semester for an intensive instructional experience (6 classroom hours per day). Subsequently they return to their work sites for five weeks. This pattern is then repeated for the remainder of the semester. Further, during the on-site portion of the semester, each student is expected to execute a field-related study "contract" drawn from the on-campus week experience but immediately applicable to the work site situation. Monitoring this process and providing instructional assistance as needed is facilitated by the presence of NDOE and University based Field Coordinators. A more recent refinement of this on-campus/off-campus design has been the addition of two Saturday on-site sessions per semester, each coming mid-way in the on-site portions of the semester. Two 8 week on-campus summer sessions round out the program design and permit completion of the 36 hour Masters program within two years.

D. Project Participants

1. Students

Project participants were many and varied. The most significant were the students. All were (are) mature individuals deeply committed to the enhancement of educational practice on the Reservation. Most had established performance records in Reservation schools. All were nominated jointly by the Advisory Council and the Department of Educational Administration for admission to the Graduate School of the University.

An early decision was to permit continuous enrollment, i.e., to allow for replacements within contractual limits as student attrition occurred. Hence, since the program's inception, 51 students have been enrolled. Of these, 21 have graduated with M.A. degrees, 19 are currently enrolled (10 of the 19 are due to complete their programs in December, 1978), and the remaining 11 withdrew or have interrupted their programs temporarily for a variety of reasons.

2. Instructional Staff

In order to demonstrate the Departmental commitment to the program, and to establish graduate level quality controls on the program offerings, instructional staff were drawn solely from within the regular faculty of the Department of Educational Administration. However, since it was recognized from the outset that the faculty might well experience difficulty in translating essentially Western European concepts and practices into the Navajo context, extensive use was made of consultants who had successfully bridged the two cultures. A partial listing of such "adjunct faculty" would include:

Mr. Benjamine Hanley, Navajo attorney and member of the House of the Arizona State Legislature

Mr. Dillon Platero, Navajo, Director, Navajo Division of Education

Mr. Larry Manuelito, Navajo, Executive Director, Ramah Navajo School Board, Inc.

Mrs. Rebecca Dotson, Navajo, Superintendent, Chinle Agency, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Dr. Bernard Strickland, Professor, School of Law, University of New Mexico

Dr. Donald Robertson, Cree, Community Liaison Officer, Brandon University, Manitoba, Canada

Mrs. Joy Hanley, Navajo, Acting President, Navajo Community College

Mr. Wayne Holm, Director, Rock Point Contract School

3. University of New Mexico

Dr. Bernard Spolsky, Dean, The Graduate School

Dr. David Darling, Dean, the College of Education

Dr. Paul Resta, Assistant Dean for Special Projects, The College of Education

Dr. Ronald Blood, Chairman, Department of Educational Administration, The College of Education

Dr. Richard Holemon, Director (initial), NATP

Dr. Paul Pohland, Director (current), NATP

Mr. Dean Jackson, Field Coordinator (current), NATP

Mr. William Rada, Graduate Assistant (current), NATP

Mrs. Elvina Strance, Secretary (current), NATP

4. Navajo Tribe

The Advisory Council

Dr. Sam Billison, Director, NDOE

Mr. Dillon Platero, Immediate past Director, NDOE

Mr. Stanley Towne, Field Coordinator, NATP

5. The Carnegie Corporation of New York

Ms. Vivian Stewart, Program Officer

Ms. Sarah Sackett, Assistant Program Officer

E. Funding

Funds for the project were provided by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The initial grant to the Navajo Tribe (Phase I and Extension) totalled $249,414. Of this sum, $88,225 was retained by the Tribe for administrative and student expense (tuition, travel, on-campus per diem, etc.), while $161,189 was allocated to UNM via a subcontract for instructional services and program administration. Phase II funding, $253,802, also provided by the Carnegie Corporation, was similarly distributed ($84,938 vs. $168,864). A more precise distribution of Phase II UNM subcontract funds is as follows:

Instruction (faculty/consultants)	$ 49,264
Instructional Support (Conferences, travel, evaluation)	30,169
Administration/Clerical/Supplies	61,266
Fringe Benefits	15,656
Indirect Costs	12,509
Total	$168,864

F. Evaluation: Process and Outcomes

From the outset, the Department of Educational Administration took the position that comprehensive evaluation, both formative and summative, was an essential part of the NAT Program and budgeted funds accordingly. Department faculty were acutely aware that significant portions of the University community were skeptical of a non-traditional graduate program. It was equally clear that past experiences with evaluations made NDOE uneasy about the prospect, particularly to probings by external evaluators unfamiliar with their educational history and current problems. The issue

was resolved by compromise: NDOE became responsible for summative evaluation while the Program Director, Dr. Richard Holemon, was charged with the responsibility of obtaining such formative evaluation data as were necessary for program monitoring and development. The latter set of activities included: (1) securing the services of Dr. Carlos Cortes of the University of California at Riverside as external consultant to the Project; (2) securing weekly and semester feedback from students; (3) obtaining systematic input from faculty, field coordinators, and field administrators; (4) and scheduling a series of major and "mini" evaluation conferences. The result of this activity was a series of largely descriptive formative evaluations.

Throughout the above series of papers, a number of themes kept re-occurring which speak to the short and long term outcomes of the project. The more salient are as follows:

1. It became clear early on that the project had generated a feasible and exportable model of graduate education without sacrificing quality control. The GPA of graduating NATP students compared most favorably with that of their non-NATP counterparts (NATP GPA = 3.54; Counterpart GPA = 3.51).

This outcome has a number of implications. First, in being feasible and exportable, as we believe the model to be, other institutions seeking non-traditional forms of programming may choose to adopt and adapt the NATP model, thus saving considerable developmental time and effort. This may be the project's major contribution to the advancement of graduate professional education. Second, the academic performance of NATP graduates should, as it did at UNM, ease the anxiety and skepticism of university

faculty relative to alternative programs. Third, and as a consequence of the second, the installation of other non-traditional graduate programs within the university structure should be simplified. Clearly this has occurred at the University of New Mexico.

2. The program has and continues to produce a cadre of Native American administrators potentially capable of significantly altering the course of Navajo education.

The potential identified here is becoming realized. For example, 8 of the initial set of graduates moved immediately upon graduation into mid-level administrative positions. This trend has continued. In brief, unlike most Masters graduates whose advancement within the school hierarchy tends to be slow (and some never advance!), NATP graduates have almost unlimited opportunity for rapid vertical and/or horizontal mobility. This leads to outcome 3.

3. The NAT Program has provided a professional career ladder for individuals whose advancement was heretofore limited or blocked.

4. Through the impetus of the NATP, professional organizations are beginning to emerge on the Navajo Reservation.

We believe this to be one of the most exciting and dramatic outcomes. For a variety of reasons, present and past NATP students are in the initial steps of formally organizing a Navajo Administrator's Association. If successful in doing so, such an Association may prove to be a significant force in Navajo Education.

5. Through the NATP, inter-institutional and inter-agency linkages have been established which are sensitive to common needs.

6. Through the interactions resulting from (5) above, new understandings have been established between the university and the Navajo people.

Both of the above speak to the broader issue of enhancing communication across cultures. The enriching of personal understanding of other peoples may be one of the major long term outcomes of the program.

G. Continuing Problems and Issues

Earlier we identified the exportability of the NATP model as one of the primary outcomes of the project. For potential adopters there are a series of cautions: the need for lead time, the need for flexibility, the need for shared decision-making, and so forth. These and similar problems are obvious and will not be discussed further. There are, however, three other problem areas which may not be so easily recognized and which will be addressed briefly; namely, shifts in the locus of control, acquisition and utilization of feedback, and providing a student "mix."

1. Changes in the locus of control

Embarking upon a major, cooperative educational endeavor inevitably leads to a redistribution of power. It is predictable that external groups (like NDOE), when pressing their claims for services on educational institutions, will wish to be influential in such matters as student selection and admission, staffing, program content and emphasis, and the instructional delivery

system. To many academics such demands are perceived as threats to traditional norms, values, and practices governing higher education, and to some degree they are. They clearly signal a demand to share in the decision-making processes and, if acceeded to, result in a shift in the locus of control. Clearly, this raises a set of philosophical as well as programmatic questions, but it does not seem unreasonable that training institutions be prepared to recognize the legitimacy of external interests, demonstrate a willingness to share decision-making authority where core academic values are not central (e.g., financial control), be prepared to accept a greater degree of ambiguity, and be willing to expend additional time and energy in coordinating decisions.

2. Acquisition and Utilization of Feedback

Non-traditional programs are, by definition, likely to be innovative, and well-conceived innovations are likely to have built-in feedback mechanisms. Such mechanisms are designed to provide program officers timely information for re-adjusting the system as necessary. This perspective, however, appears to be based on a set of underlying assumptions including the following: (1) the nature of the external (or internal) environment of the project may have been initially misconstrued by program designers; (2) despite an initially inaccurate perception of the environment, the environment is sufficiently benign to accept proposed alterations; (3) management is sufficiently powerful to impose change given a recalcitrant environment; (4) the system is amenable

to change; and (5) all parties involved are equally interested in the acquisition and utilization of feedback.

In the NAT Program only the first assumption was borne out. University planners miscalculated the nature of the external environment, the turbulence of that environment, their own ability to effect change, the difficulties in making mid-stream changes, and the like. Further, it became quickly apparent that while the NATP was an ever present and immediate reality to university faculty and program staff, and as such emphasized the critical nature of feedback, it did not occupy a position of similar stature in other organizations. Retrospectively, this could have been anticipated. The point, in brief, is that the collection and utilization of feedback is simpler conceptually than operationally.

3. The Student "Mix"

A commonly held belief is that bringing together students with diverse backgrounds and experiences is educationally desirable. Conversely, it is frequently held that programs devised to meet the unique needs of a particular clientele are best treated as separate entities. Obviously one cannot hold both positions simultaneously, and hence the tension between integration and separation. This tension became manifested in the NATP insofar as providing meaningful interaction between NATP students and "regular" students was concerned. Retrospectively, the designers failed to address this issue explicitly during the

planning stage and by default opted for separation in the instructional delivery system. Later attempts to remediate this weakness were largely unsuccessful.

In brief, non-traditional programs have an associated set of equally non-traditional problems. Latent rather than manifest problems are the order of the day.